

fully in the search for a fair and comprehensive settlement. There is now a unique opportunity for all sides—Nationalists and Unionists—working with the two Governments to advance the cause of peace.

We pledge to continue to do all we can to support the peace process. On this St. Patrick's Day, we rededicate ourselves to working with all those who continue to be genuinely committed to the achievement of a lasting peace for Northern Ireland.

FRIENDS OF IRELAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
UNITED STATES SENATE

Edward M. Kennedy.
Claiborne Pell.
Daniel Patrick Moynihan.
Christopher J. Dodd.

U.S. CONSUMPTION OF FOREIGN
OIL? HERE'S TODAY'S WEEKLY
BOX SCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute reports that, for the week ending March 8, the United States imported 7,315,000 barrels of oil daily, 506,000 barrels less than the 7,821,000 barrels imported during the same period 1 year ago, but 986,000 barrels more than the 6,329,000 barrels imported the previous week, March 1, 1996.

Americans now rely on foreign oil for more than 50 percent of their needs, and there are no signs that this upward trend will abate.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil—by U.S. producers using American workers? Politicians better ponder the economic calamity that will occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply, or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 7,315,000 barrels a day.

CHINA AND TAIWAN

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, during the past 3 weeks, several unfortunate events that threaten peace and stability around the world have occurred. In Israel and in the skies off the Cuban coast, innocent men, women, and children have lost their lives as a result of those tragedies. Moreover, countless others continue to suffer the consequences of increased tensions between countries and groups of people who have long been separated by ideological or religious differences.

Like many of my colleagues, I have already expressed my outrage at the unnecessary tragedy in the Straits of Florida and the unconscionable suicide bombings in Israel. I want to take this opportunity to voice my strong concerns about the recent escalation of tensions between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

In the past week, China has taken several actions intended to intimidate the people of Taiwan and influence its upcoming presidential elections. On March 5, Beijing announced its decision to conduct guided-missile tests near Taiwan. Three days later, China

launched the first three missiles in tests it intends to conduct until March 15. On March 9, China announced its plans to conduct live-ammunition war exercises in the Strait of Taiwan until March 20, just 3 days before Taiwan's presidential elections.

As Secretary of State Warren Christopher indicated recently, these actions are "risky, and smack of intimidation and coercion." China's actions create grave risks to stability in that region. I urge China's leadership to halt these dangerous and provocative actions immediately.

Make no mistake, the risk is real. China's missile tests and military exercises are dangerous in and of themselves, and they increase the chances of an accident that could cause tensions to spiral out of control.

When China conducted similar missile tests in July and August of last year, the target areas were 85 and 80 miles north of Taiwan, respectively. By contrast, the target zone for the surface-to-surface missiles fired last week are only half as far from Taiwan, and far too close to major airline and shipping routes.

Of the three missiles launched last week, two landed near the port of Keelung which is only 23 miles from Taiwan's northern coast and approximately 30 miles from Taipei, Taiwan's capital. The third missile landed in a target zone near the port of Kaohsiun, which is only 35 miles from Taiwan's southern coast.

Thankfully, the three missiles fired last week and the one fired this week landed where the Chinese intended. However, China intends to conduct similar missile tests in the same zones. If one of these missiles should stray off-course and mistakenly land in Taiwan, or hit a ship or an airliner, the repercussions would be severe. Needless to say, under such circumstances, Taiwan could not be expected to sit idly by, and the Clinton administration has continually warned that if an accident occurs, China "will be held accountable." I would like to lend my voice to those warnings.

Even if China's missile tests and military exercises go as planned, the inevitable result is greater difficulties in the day-to-day lives of the Taiwanese people. Taiwan's stock market has already experienced a great deal of volatility, and the fluctuations would have been greater had it not been for government initiatives. Flights for commercial airlines will also be disrupted this week when aircraft will be forced to change routes to avoid China's military exercises, and shipping has been delayed or diverted to avoid the missile test zones.

Despite the heroic efforts by President Lee to keep the people of Taiwan calm during these trying times, China's threatening actions will continue to inject fear into the daily lives of the Taiwanese people. Beijing's time and efforts would be far better spent trying to communicate with Taiwan in a non-

threatening and peaceful way rather than carrying out reckless missile tests and military exercises.

Finally, Mr. President, there should be no misunderstanding that if China's missile tests and military exercises should develop into actual military action against Taiwan, the United States is well prepared to respond. The carrier U.S.S. *Independence*, accompanied by three warships, was recently ordered to move near Taiwan. Moreover, the U.S.S. *Nimitz* and five to six additional ships are expected to arrive near Taiwan before the upcoming presidential elections.

The irony is that China is conducting missile tests and military exercises in order to curb support for Taiwan independence. The fact of the matter is, most Taiwanese, as well as a majority of their elected leaders, are committed to reunification, but only reunification achieved through peaceful means.

United States policy, as spelled out in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, stipulates that the future relationship between China and Taiwan should be determined by peaceful means. I sincerely hope China will not miscalculate United States resolve in this regard. With the leadership of President Clinton, the United States stands ready to assist Taiwan if necessary. Again, I urge the People's Republic of China to cease its intimidation of Taiwan and to resolve its differences with the Taiwanese peacefully.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON AGENT
ORANGE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would like to call to our colleagues' attention important new findings on the relationship between Agent Orange exposure and certain health conditions. Earlier today, the Institute of Medicine [IOM], which is part of the National Academy of Sciences [NAS], released an update to their 1994 report, "Veterans and Agent Orange: Health Effects of Herbicides Used in Vietnam." These reports were mandated in the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-4), which I authored with Senator JOHN KERRY, Senator ALAN CRANSTON and Representative LANE EVANS.

This report confirms what Vietnam veterans have long known: The Vietnam war is still claiming innocent victims.

Unfortunately, the findings announced today validate veterans' worst fears about Agent Orange—that their children are suffering serious health consequences as a result of their parents' military service.

The report found evidence suggestive of an association between veterans' exposure to Agent Orange and the presence of a severe form of spina bifida in their children.

This type of spina bifida is an incurable birth defect characterized by a deformity in the spinal cord that often results in serious neurological problems, which require lifelong medical

treatment. The cost of caring for a child with spina bifida can devastate a family.

The report concluded that there is inadequate evidence at this time to determine whether there may be an association to Agent Orange exposure and any other birth defects.

The Federal Government has a moral responsibility to help veterans whose children suffer from spina bifida and to meet their children's health care needs. This should include the provision of essential medical care and case management services to coordinate health and social services for the child.

But the Government's responsibility does not end there. American soldiers were exposed to Agent Orange, and some of their children are now paying a terrible price. The Federal Government also has a responsibility to compensate these families.

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Jesse Brown has said he will appoint a task force to review the findings of the new IOM-NAS report and make policy recommendations to him within 90 days. I applaud the Secretary for his aggressive pursuit of the scientific facts related to Agent Orange and am hopeful that the task force will help Congress and the Secretary identify appropriate measures to address this unprecedented situation.

Toward that end, I am asking Secretary Brown to direct the task force to consider the following several specific questions as part of their review:

First, what is the most appropriate way to provide health care to veterans' children with spina bifida—through the VA directly or through contracts with other providers?

Second, what kinds of case management services are needed to maximize the quality of life for these children, and their ability to function? And how can they be delivered most effectively?

Third, should veterans' children with other birth defects be provided those same services?

Finally, what is the most appropriate means of compensating the families of children who suffer from spina bifida as a result of their parent's exposure to Agent Orange?

I am also asking the Secretary to ensure that the task force, as it considers these questions, seeks the input of organizations and individuals familiar with the unique treatment and case management needs of children suffering from spina bifida and other birth defects. I also hope the panel will consult with experts in the field of injury compensation for children. Congress and the VA have an obligation to seek and heed the best advice these experts have to offer.

We need answers to these questions as soon as possible. The families of these children need help, and they have waited long enough.

Mr. President, the association between Agent Orange exposure and spina bifida was not the only new finding in this report. The IOM Committee

also updated its finding on skin cancer, moving it from category IV—"suggestive of no association with exposure"—to category III—diseases for which there is "insufficient evidence to make a determination."

This change underscores the fact that we still do not understand fully the long-term effects of Agent Orange exposure. To facilitate my colleagues' and the public's understanding of these findings, I ask that a table from today's report, which explains the four-tiered classification system and summarizes the results of this study, be printed at the close of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. DASCHLE. Until we have all the facts, Congress must continue, as we have done since 1981, to give veterans the benefit of the doubt and provide them free health care for conditions potentially related to their exposure.

The NAS is helping us compile an important scientific record that is instrumental to Congress' effort to address the health and compensation needs of veterans. I commend the Institute of Medicine for its excellent work. This report builds on our scientific knowledge of the long-term health consequences of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides. It recognizes that our understanding of these issues is still evolving. And it recommends additional work that should be done to further that understanding.

The NAS report also serves as a valuable reminder that the impact of war is felt decades beyond the final shots. This holds for the Persian Gulf war as well as the war in Vietnam. We must be prepared to learn from the scientific effort on Agent Orange and apply these lessons to the effort to discover the true health effects of environmental hazards on the men and women who served in the gulf and on their children.

I look forward to working with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, veterans organizations, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the NAS, independent scientists, and others to address the issues raised in this report and to continue to search for the truth and a better understanding of the lasting health effects of military service.

EXHIBIT 1

Table 1-1. Updated summary of findings in occupational, environmental, and veterans studies regarding the association between specific health problems and exposure to herbicides.

SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF AN ASSOCIATION

Evidence is sufficient to conclude that there is a positive association. That is, a positive association has been observed between herbicides and the outcome in studies in which chance, bias, and confounding could be ruled out with reasonable confidence. For example, if several small studies that are free from bias and confounding show an association that is consistent in magnitude and direction, there may be sufficient evidence for an association. There is sufficient evidence of an association between exposure to

herbicides and the following health outcomes: Soft-tissue sarcoma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, chloracne.

LIMITED/SUGGESTIVE EVIDENCE OF AN ASSOCIATION

Evidence is suggestive of an association between herbicides and the outcome but is limited because chance, bias, and confounding could not be ruled out with confidence. For example, at least one high-quality study shows a positive association, but the results of other studies are inconsistent. There is limited/suggestive evidence of an association between exposure to herbicides and the following health outcomes: Respiratory cancers (lung, larynx, trachea), prostate cancer, multiple myeloma, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy (new disease category), spina bifida (new disease category), porphyria cutanea tarda (category change in 1996).

INADEQUATE/INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO DETERMINE WHETHER AN ASSOCIATION EXISTS

The available studies are of insufficient quality, consistency, or statistical power to permit a conclusion regarding the presence or absence of an association. For example, studies fail to control for confounding, have inadequate exposure assessment, or fail to address latency. There is inadequate or insufficient evidence to determine whether an association exists between exposure to herbicides and the following health outcomes: Hepatobiliary cancers, nasal/nasopharyngeal cancer, bone cancer, female reproductive cancers (cervical, uterine, ovarian), breast cancer, renal cancer, testicular cancer, leukemia, spontaneous abortion, birth defects (other than spina bifida), neonatal/infant death and stillbirths, low birthweight, childhood cancer in offspring, abnormal sperm parameters and infertility, cognitive and neuropsychiatric disorders, motor/coordination dysfunction, chronic peripheral nervous system disorders, metabolic and digestive disorders (diabetes, changes in liver enzymes, lipid abnormalities, ulcers), immune system disorders (immune suppression and autoimmunity), circulatory disorders, respiratory disorders, skin cancer (category change in 1996).

LIMITED/SUGGESTIVE EVIDENCE OF NO ASSOCIATION

Several adequate studies, covering the full range of levels of exposure that human beings are known to encounter, are mutually consistent in not showing a positive association between exposure to herbicides and the outcome at any level of exposure. A conclusion of "no association" is inevitably limited to the conditions, level of exposure, and length of observation covered by the available studies. In addition, the possibility of a very small elevation in risk at the levels of exposure studied can never be excluded. There is limited/suggestive evidence of no association between exposure to herbicides and the following health outcomes: Gastrointestinal tumors (stomach cancer, pancreatic cancer, colon cancer, rectal cancer), bladder cancer, brain tumors.

Note.—"Herbicides" refers to the major herbicides used in Vietnam: 2,4-D (2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid); 2,4,5-T (2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid) and its contaminant TCDD (2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin); cacodylic acid; and picloram. The evidence regarding association is drawn from occupational and other studies in which subjects were exposed to a variety of herbicides and herbicide components.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to